

In the Claims

1. (cancelled)
2. (original) A software agent for a party conducting electronic trading, comprising a transaction engine; a negotiation engine driven by the transaction engine; and a store of a plurality of negotiation profiles; and control means responsive to the commercial situation or state of the party to select the optimal negotiation profile appropriate to that situation or state, and to cause the transaction engine to initiate or conduct e-commerce negotiations using the negotiation engine programmed with the selected negotiation profile.
3. (currently amended) A method of performing automated reverse auction on an electronic network using software agents for buyers and sellers wherein the software agent for each buyer and each seller comprises a transaction engine; a negotiation engine driven by the transaction engine; and a store of a plurality of negotiation profiles; and control means responsive to the commercial situation or state of the party to select the optimal negotiation profile appropriate to that situation or state, and to cause the transaction engine to initiate or conduct e-commerce negotiations using the negotiation engine programmed with the selected negotiation profile.
4. (cancelled)
5. (currently amended) A method of automated bi-lateral negotiation in which buyers' agents co-operate to produce a call for proposal to purchase collectively from one or more seller wherein the software agent for each buyer and each seller comprises a transaction engine; a negotiation engine driven by the transaction engine; and a store of a plurality of negotiation profiles; and control means responsive to the commercial situation or state of the party to select the optimal

negotiation profile appropriate to that situation or state, and to cause the transaction engine to initiate or conduct e-commerce negotiations using the negotiation engine programmed with the selected negotiation profile.

6. (original) A method according to Claim 5, in which each buyer is represented by a software agent.
7. (original) A method according to Claim 5, in which each seller is represented by a software agent.
8. (original) A method according to Claim 5, comprising the use of an intermediate software agent between the buyers and the or each seller, for negotiating a contract between the or each seller and the collective buyers.
9. (original) A method according to Claim 6, in which each software agent comprises a transaction engine; a negotiation engine driven by the transaction engine; and a store of a plurality of negotiation profiles; and control means responsive to the commercial situation or state of the party to select the optimal negotiation profile appropriate to that situation or state, and to cause the transaction engine to initiate or conduct e-commerce negotiations using the negotiation engine programmed with the selected negotiation profile.
10. (currently amended) An intermediate re-selling software agent for use on an electronic network for negotiating contracts between at least one buyer and at least one seller, by purchasing from a seller and re-selling it to a buyer the intermediate re-selling software agent comprising a transaction engine; a negotiation engine driven by the transaction engine; and a store of a plurality of negotiation profiles; and control means responsive to the commercial situation or state of the party to select the optimal negotiation profile appropriate to that situation or state, and to

cause the transaction engine to initiate or conduct e-commerce negotiations using the negotiation engine programmed with the selected negotiation profile.

11. (cancelled)

12. (currently amended) An intermediate negotiation system for e-commerce comprising multiple software agents capable of being engaged by buyers and/or sellers, and an interface for negotiating contracts between respective agents of at least one buyer and at least one seller each software agent comprises a transaction engine; a negotiation engine driven by the transaction engine; and a store of a plurality of negotiation profiles; and control means responsive to the commercial situation or state of the party to select the optimal negotiation profile appropriate to that situation or state, and to cause the transaction engine to initiate or conduct e-commerce negotiations using the negotiation engine programmed with the selected negotiation profile.

13. (original) An intermediate negotiation system according to Claim 12, arranged to conduct an automated reverse auction on an electronic network using software agents for buyers and sellers.

14. (cancelled)

15. (currently amended) A system according to Claim [[1]] 27, in which each software agent is a component of a distributed architecture.

16. (original) A system according to Claim 12, in which each software agent is a component of a distributed architecture.

17. (original) A method according to Claim 3, in which each software agent is a component of a distributed architecture.

18. (original) A method according to Claim 5, in which each software agent is a component of a distributed architecture.
19. (original) A software agent according to Claim 2, in which the negotiation engine is a component of a distributed architecture.
20. (original) An intermediate re-selling software agent according to Claim 10, which is a component of a distributed architecture.
21. (original) An intermediate negotiation system according to Claim 12, which is a component of a distributed architecture.
22. (currently amended) A system according to Claim [[1]] 27, in which the software is implemented as FIPA open source.
23. (currently amended) A communications network comprising a system according to Claim [[1]]27.
24. (original) A communications network according to Claim 23, in which the network consists of the Internet.
25. (currently amended) A computer program for creating a system according to Claim [[1]] 27.
26. (original) A computer program for creating a software agent according to Claim 2.
27. (new) A system for performing automated reverse auction comprising the steps of:
 - a first software agent receiving a request for a service from a buyer;

the first software agent requesting negotiation for provision of the service with at least one other agent; and
the first software agent responding to a proposal for providing provision of the service from a second agent.

28.(new) A method for performing automated reverse auction comprising the steps of:

a first software agent receiving a request for a service from a buyer;
the first software agent requesting negotiation for provision of the service with at least one other agent; and
the first software agent responding to a proposal for providing provision of the service from a second agent.